APP0248-2

THE SITUATION OF CHURCH IN EAST TIMOR

1. The Situation in Dili Diocese:

1.1. Area : 18.000 km2 devided into 13 districts, 64 subdistricts and 400 villages

1.2. Language : Indonesian and 33 dialects, "Tetum" language is the lingua - franca which is also used in liturgies and catechism.

1.3. Population : 670.800 people; including 15.000 people who stay in Portugal and Australia and 10.000 new comers from other islands (The Indonesian Armed Forces is not included).

1.4. Religion : Catholic (534.000 people) catecuments (2.000 people)
Protestant (25.000 people)
Moslem (15.000 people)
Budhism/Hinduism (2.000 people)
* Dili diocese was founded on September 14, 1940.

1.5. Priest : 22 diocesan priests (18 native and 4 foreign)
16 Salesian(SDB)
7 SVD
4 Jesuit

1.6. Sisters' Congregation: Cannossians, Carmelitas, CB, PRR, SSpS, OSU. (± 60 sisters)

1.7. Lay apostles : 1011 people work in parishes both as part-timer and full-timer.

1.8. Cadre Building: a. 57 students study at Minor Seminary and some of them were sent to Ritrapet, Flores to study Theology and Philosophy in 1978. The outputs are 4 priests, 1 diacon and 2 more will be vowed in October 1987.

b. 23 students were sent to Major Seminary in Malang in 1985, and 10 students will be sent next year.

1.9. Education : There are 84 Catholic Elementary schools, 20 Catholic Junior Highschools and 6 Catholic Senior Highschools

Pastoral Needs:

1. The need of priests in parishes is obviously seen, especially in the ones led by diocesan priests. One priest serves more than 10.000 people. Besides, he has to work for education, youth guidance and ~~categorical~~ catechetical apostolate.

2. There is an "explosion" of young people and at most public schools (Junior Highschools, Senior Highschools, Economic Senior Highschools, Agricultural and Industrial Highschools), there is no catechist. East Timor Governor, Mario Carascalho, appeals the church to involve in youth guidance by founding dormitories for students from remote places in Dili but there is no one organize them.

3. In the last five years, there has been a movement to convert people to Moslem. Catholic church lacks for church personnels, skilled personnels and fund to restrain from that movement.

3. Political Situation:

Catholics in East Timor convey their problems:

a. Since East Timor integrated into Republic of Indonesia, there has been a prominent rapid change in the economic, social and cultural system of the society. An obvious change of the social system is the shift of church and church's personnel domination which is used to have an absolute influence on the society. Now another religion grows and reduces the previous church leaders' power.

b. There is a change of government's view on the society, while the society, themselves do not have the courage to speak frankly to the government or to the church leaders. It creates a tense situation in East Timor.

c. There are some government officials who do not comply with the situation and abuse their authority. Even some have a certain mission which offend the people.

4. Suggested Approaches:

a. To give church leaders, priests, brothers, sisters and laymen the authority to do pastoral and social activities so that the church can play a more important role in solving social problems and make peace prevail.

b. To give the Governor, and his officials in regencies, subregencies and villages a complete authority to manage the province so that the administration can run smoothly.

c, To rearrange the government officials all over the province based on the local and national need like the willingness to understand the people's aspiration, dedication and morality.